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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Radio Service
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS Wednesday, October 5, 1932.

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes All Regions.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Now for a chat with our old friend Neighbor Thompson who prepares the PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS, a weekly agricultural feature for city dwellers who like to grow flowers, and fruits, and vegetables at home. Today we hear about the FALL CARE OF ROSES.

--ooOoo--

Mother Thompson came out and opened the garage doors for me the other afternoon. I knew what that meant! She wanted help.

And sure enough, before I could get out of the car, she asked me to help her with the ROSES.

"Is it time for that?" I asked.

"Certainly", she said, "it is time for the roses. This is the beginning of October, and time we got our roses ready to go through the fall and winter. So run up stairs and get off your white collar, and get in your overalls while I get out the pruning shears and the spading fork." Well, there was nothing else for me to do, especially as she promised me a lemon pie if I would do it.

I don't know whether you listeners are for or against lemon pies, but I'm for 'em---especially the kind that Mother Thompson makes. So when she mentioned lemon pie---I was on my way.

But that pie wasn't the only reason I agreed to help with the roses. I know, from more than 10 years of experience in growing roses, that it pays to give rose bushes special attention in the fall, if you want nice roses in the spring.

For instance, I always give our rose bushes a dose of fertilizer in the fall. But I don't do it until the bushes have stopped growing and I don't use nitrogen then. I gave our rose bushes a dose of fertilizer before they stopped growing one year and they kept right on growing until they were killed back by cold weather. That experience taught me a good lesson. Now I wait until our rose bushes stop growing before I put on the fertilizer.

My plan of fertilizing rose bushes in the fall is to give the soil around the bushes a top dressing of bone meal. I use a big handful of bone meal to each rose bush, and spread the meal pretty well over the surface. I never put it directly around the bush. I apply bone meal in the fall because that gives the bone meal a chance to work into the soil during the winter, and because it takes bone meal a few months to decay enough for the rose bushes to use it.

When I can get it, I also give my rose bushes a fall does of good dairy barn manure. I like the plan of using composted manure and applying it in the form of a mulch. By putting that mulch on in the fall, it has time to rot well during the winter and to be in a good condition to stimulate the growth of the rose bushes in the spring.

W. R. Beattie, garden adviser of the Department of Agriculture, tells me that roses continue to get the benefits from an application of dairy barn manure for more than a year after it is put on. He says that dairy barn manure is one of the best fertilizers for roses and the ideal time to use dairy barn manure is after the bushes stop growing in the fall.

Fall is not only a good time to feed roses fertilizer but it is also a good time to prune the bushes in some sections. And when I say PRUNE, that is exactly what I mean.
Mother Thompson goes in the house when I start pruning the roses. She says she just can't stand to see me cut away the season's growth and leave nothing but a few main stubs 12 or 14 inches high. That's what we do in our section in pruning tea, and hybrid tea roses in the fall. I go over the plants and pick out the stems I want to leave for next year's crop. I cut everything else away. Sometimes I even give the stems that I save in the fall a further pruning in the spring, but we'll talk about that at the proper time next spring.

And before I forget it let me tell you what I do to prevent cankering, or prevent the cut stems from dying at the ends. Cankering is a serious rose trouble in some sections of the country. I avoid that trouble, where I have only a few bushes to prune by painting the cut ends and a greater part of the stubs with Bordeaux mixture. When I prune a lot of rose bushes at one time I solve the canker problem by filling my spray pump with Bordeaux mixture and giving each plant a thorough coating of the spray. When I use the pump I shoot straight at the cut portions of the stems and hold the spray there until I'm satisfied that each wound is well covered and protected. A good covering of Bordeaux mixture--either sprayed or painted on the cut portions---is the best insurance against canker or dying ends.

Bordeaux mixture is also a good protection against the rose disease known as "black spot." I had a little black spot on my roses this summer, but by picking the fallen leaves, trimming away affected parts, and spraying with Bordeaux mixture, I managed to control the black spot and keep the leaves pretty clean.

In a few instances, I have found it advisable to spray my rose bushes during the winter months. But I only do that when the bushes are troubled with scale insects, and I never spray then until the stems are perfectly dormant. As a rule, scale insect sprays are too strong for green plants.

I never count my fall rose chores over until I pick up the prunings and clean out the rose beds. Dry rose thorns can make trouble of the worst sort. I was taught to avoid them when I was a barefoot boy, but I didn't always do it. I got stuck occasionally. It hurt so much that I still remember it. I wouldn't want anybody, not even my worst enemy, to put his barefoot down on a dry, thorny, rose branch.

I solve the rose thorn problem by burning up the prunings. I burn them in an incinerator. I have a small incinerator in one corner of my back yard garden, and when I get through pruning the rose bushes, I gather up the prunings, and burn them immediately before they have time to get scattered. That not only gets rid of the thorns, but it also gets rid of the diseases and insects on the prunings.

Last of all, I remove the weeds, and clean up the beds, and then trim the edges of my rose beds with a sharp spade. That ends the fall work in my rose garden.

Regions: 2,3,4,5,8,9, and Northern 10

Later on and before cold weather sets in I'll cover or bank our rose bushes in some way to protect them from the cold. Cold weather is rather hard on the average rose bush.

Our friend and garden adviser WRB protects his rose bushes from the cold by banking the strong bushes with soil and covering the tender shoots with straw. Rye straw is best. Wrap a coating of straw around each and tie it in several places. Where I use the soil bank I usually bank the earth up of, say from 8 to 12 inches high around each plant, the amount depending of course on the severity of the climate.

Another way to protect rose plants from cold weather is to bank the bushes and build a board frame around the bush or the bed and fill that with dry leaves. But the leaves must be dry, and they must be kept dry during the winter. Wet leaves will freeze, and do the rose bushes more harm than good. If I use leaves to protect my rose plants from the cold I cover the leaves so they'll stay dry all the winter.

I know a rose grower who lifts his choicest bushes in the fall and puts them in the cellar for the winter. He pots the rose bushes and gives them enough water to keep them in good condition. He resets them in the rose border as soon as the ground is fit to work in the spring. But that takes a lot of work. Besides, lifting bushes gives them a setback, and that doesn't do them any good. So I just protect my roses from the cold by banking them with dirt, or covering them with straw or leaves and leaving them in the ground where they grow.

That's all on the fall care of roses. And now until this time next Wednesday, Mother Thompson and I bid you good day.

ANNOUNCEMENT: And that, ladies and gentlemen, was Neighbor Thompson's PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture and coming to you from Station _____ in _____.

Regions: 6,7 and Southern 10

Our biggest rose problem in this section comes during the winter months. Our winters are so mild that the bushes grow all winter. They don't have much of a dormant season.

There is danger too, of our roses making a "soft growth" during the fall that will be killed back by sudden freezes in January and February. But I don't know of any way to prevent the bushes from making that advance fall growth. I try to keep our rose bushes from making the soft growth in the fall by cutting out the nitrogenous fertilizers about the middle of the summer. I never use a highly nitrogenous fertilizer late in the summer or in the fall. But even that precaution doesn't always work. So I let nature take it's course. When my rose bushes get killed back, I just prune off the frozen branches and let the bushes make a new start.

I don't think it advisable to bank or cover rose bushes in this section like they do in the colder sections. Winter protection here is largely a matter of providing temporary protection during our relatively short cold spells. I often protect one of my choice rose bushes from a cold spell by turning a box over it and leaving it covered until the weather moderates. A covering of paper will do just as well.

My plan of protecting roses in this climate during the winter months is to provide temporary protection for cold snaps, prune heavily after the plants stop growing, and apply my nitrogenous fertilizers late in the winter or in the early spring.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: And that, ladies and gentlemen, was Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture and sent to you from Station _____ in _____.

Regions 11 and 12

But I don't get to rest long. Our winter climate is too mild for rose bushes to sleep. They take a little dormant nap now and then but before you realize it they are awake and growing again, and that means work. There's always work around a growing rose bush.

For instance, I find it advisable to water my rose bushes at times during the so called dormant season. It's a mistake to let the soil around rose bushes get too dry. Once the bushes dry out and the roots become fairly dry their growth gets a check that is hard to overcome. So, I make a practice of watering my rose bushes whenever they need it, regardless of the season.

Then there's pruning. I do a lot of pruning during the winter months. I don't prune if I can help it until the plants are dormant. But the minute I find one of my rose bushes asleep I call for the shears and trim it before it wakes.

Then there's fertilizers, and insects, and plenty of other rose jobs that'll keep you busy and reduce the belt-line if you're having trouble in that neighborhood.

I'm still of the opinion that bone meal is one of the best commercial fertilizers for roses. Dairy barn manure is also good. Both fertilizers give the best results when they are applied in the fall and thoroughly mixed with the soil.

That's all. And now Mother Thompson and I bid you good day until this time next Wednesday.

ANNOUNCEMENT: And that, ladies and gentlemen, was Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS coming to you from Station _____ in _____.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS — Wednesday, October 12, 1932.

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes — All Regions.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Ladies and gentlemen, this is Station_____in_____ presenting Neighbor Thompson's PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS, a weekly agricultural feature prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture. We hear this week about--RATS---MICE---and CHICKENS.

--oOo--

As I turned into the driveway at home one afternoon last fall I caught a glimpse of Mother Thompson. She was going around the corner of the house at a mile-a-minute with a broom in her hand.

I slammed on the brakes, jumped out of the car, and rushed around the house after her. I found her on the other side thrashing a lilac bush with the broom, panting like a lizard, and mad as a hornet.

I asked her what she was after and she said,

"RATS! I've got a terrible big rat cornered in that bush. Hurry. Get something and help me kill it before it gets away."

I grabbed the first thing in sight, which was the coal shovel, and together Mother Thompson and I charged the lilac bush. In the scramble after the rat Mother Thompson hit me on the knee with the broom and I skinned the lilac bush with the coal shovel. And the rat-----the dirty thief----got away.

But it didn't stay away long because it had got a taste of my chicken feed---and when a rat gets a taste of feed----it's sure to come back for more.

Now I'm about as careful as the average person around a place. I try to keep things in order and everything in its place, and try to keep the feeds that rats like to eat where they can't get to them. But I got careless. I left the chicken house door open one morning. That old rat smelled the feed, found the opening, and took possession. When Mother Thompson went to gather the eggs that afternoon, there was that rat helping itself at the feed hopper. Mother Thompson grabbed a broom and started after the rat. In the excitement the rat ran over Mother Thompson's feet, and finally escaped to the lilac bush where we let it get away.

But as I said a while ago the rat didn't stay away because it got a taste of feed. Let a hungry rat get a taste of feed, especially at this season of the year, and it's apt to stay with you until you kill the rat or cut off its feed supply. Rats eat to live. And rats are on the lookout now for winter quarters that are not only comfortable but that are also either well supplied or in rat distance of the feeds they like.

So, it wasn't long until our rat bobbed up again. It couldn't get any more feed at the chicken house. The door took care of that. So it visited the garbage can. Rats are fond of garbage, and unless you use a metal can with a tight-fitting cover, you're just playing right into the hands of the rats.

Now Mother Thompson is a wonder when it comes to keeping the garbage IN the can. But the rat didn't know that. It smelled the food, built a nest in the ground under the back steps near the garbage can, and lived in hopes. One morning Mother Thompson was filling the can with odds and ends and left the cover off between trips. When she came back with more garbage, there was the rat, in the can, helping itself.

The fight that followed upset the garbage can, soiled Mother Thompson's clean hose, and left her in a bad humor, but the rat got away. And we learned another lesson. We learned that rats make their hide-outs near the feeds they like. You've got to get rid of their harboring places as well as starve them out. So we dug out the rat nest under the back steps and thought we had won the fight. But we hadn't.

I was moving a pile of lumber in the back yard one afternoon. Mother Thompson was helping. We were almost through. I moved a long plank. Mother Thompson jumped back, let out a war whoop, grabbed a garden hoe and started across the yard towards the house. In front of her was that same old rat. It was still with us. It had simply made another nest--under the pile of lumber in the back yard. It got away again too but not without losing a part of its long tail. Mother Thompson chopped that off with the garden hoe during the half-hour fight in the shrubbery.

That taught us something too. That made us realize that material that makes good rat harbors ought to be destroyed or else piled on platforms at least 18 inches above the ground so that rats can't nest under it.

No matter how much our town does to prevent rats from getting a foothold, we find it a good plan to put on a community rat killing about once a year. We use poison bait. Everybody puts it out at the same time so that all the rats in the Neighborhood will be killed. Then it is a long time before the rats come back.

We use RED SQUILL. The Bureau of Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, recommends red squill. It is one of the best and safest raticides on the market. Red squill kills rats, but it hardly ever injures domestic animals.

Our last rat killing campaign was under the united direction of the City council, the local chamber of commerce, and the county agricultural agent. A few weeks after the campaign I was digging in the shrubbery near the house. And what do you suppose I found? I found the dried skeleton of a bob-tailed rat. It evidently ate red squill bait during the rat killing campaign, and then went to its hole under the ground to die. That was the end of our rat that hung on all the winter because it got a taste of feed in the fall, and because it found a harboring place during the winter.

James Silver of the Biological Survey of the Federal Department of Agriculture says, and I'm quoting, "If you want to get rid of rats, deprive them of nesting places, and cut off their food supplies. Don't let them get a taste of food, and you can literally starve them away from your premises. If they refuse to leave, use poison bait and kill them on the spot."

Those are Mr. Silver's recommendations for controlling rats. Remember the three things he recommends. They are; NO FOOD--NO SHELTER--and POISON BAIT.

Now when it comes to controlling MICE, well, that's something else. I don't find it advisable to poison mice in the average home. A common snap-trap will do the work.

Here are Mr. Silver's suggestions on how to set a mouse-trap. He says take advantage of the route the mouse travels in its scamperings around the building. A mouse invariably runs along the wall between openings to its destination. So, set the mouse trap close to the wall with the trigger end of the trap in the line of march. Bait the trigger with cheese, chocolate candy, or fresh bread or cake. When you trap a mouse, remove the mouse from the trap, and then rebait and reset it until you clean out the mice. Then put the trap away until somebody pulls up her skirts and screams "MOUSE."

Now for the monthly poultry pointers for the back-yard flock. This is October---about the middle of the month I believe----and Mr. A.R.Lee of the Bureau of Animal Industry offers the following suggestions for the month.

First, he says, house your pullets now if you haven't already done so, and make them as comfortable as possible. Your late-hatched pullets may not be laying yet, but they'll start pretty soon if you take good care of them. Early hatched pullets ought to be laying now.

His second suggestion is, keep your flock healthy this fall and winter. Cull out the runty birds now and prevent roup and colds from developing.

Third, he says, feed freely to stimulate egg laying. Mash makes eggs. Feed plenty of mash in October. Mash moistened with milk is much better than egg tonics.

Mr. Lee says that the October egg standard for the farm flock is 5 eggs per bird. My early hatched pullets usually lay about 7 eggs per bird in October, but my old hens produce only about 3 eggs each, and that pulls the October average down to 5 eggs per bird for a combination flock of pullets and hens.

That's all for today. At this time next Wednesday I'm going to talk about beautifying the home grounds this fall. Until then, Mother Thompson and I bid you good-bye and good luck.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: And that concludes Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS sent to you from Station_____in_____ through the courtesy of the United States Department of Agriculture

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS — Wednesday, October 19, 1932.

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes. — All Regions.

ANNOUNCEMENT: This is Wednesday, and time to turn another page in Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture. Here goes the page--------(sound of rattling paper)-----and here is the new subject-- BEAUTIFYING HOME GROUNDS THIS FALL. All right, we're off.

---ooOoo---

I'm just old fashioned enough to believe that there's a lot of truth in the statement "A stitch in time saves nine." I believe that statement applies particularly to beautifying home grounds in the fall.

We hear a lot about landscaping, improving, and beautifying home grounds in the spring when nature is putting on a new dress. And there's nothing wrong in improving home grounds at that time. Most everywhere spring is an ideal time for touching up the home grounds.

But Mother Thompson and I have found from many years of experience that it pays to start the improvement program in the fall. Beautifying home grounds requires both time and thought and by starting the work in the fall you can give more time to the project than you can if you wait until spring sets in. At least, that's been my experience. I like to start the work in the fall, carry it on through the winter, and finish in the spring without having to rush.

Fall is a good time to plan changes in the landscape. Fall is also a good time to remove broken branches from shade trees, cut out dead limbs in the evergreens, and touch up the appearance of the place in general. Every lick you put in this fall will save that much work next spring.

For instance, take the job of weed control. I stopped mowing our lawn a little too early one fall and the weeds and grass got pretty high before cold weather came. Our lawn looked brown and ragged that winter, and I had to put more work on it than usual to get it in shape the next spring. That taught me a lesson. Now I clip and water our lawn until cold weather comes. That gives me a neat looking lawn during the winter and saves many a hard lick in the spring.

But my fall improvement program goes further than the lawn, the shade trees, and flower beds. It takes in the vegetable garden too. I've found it pays as well to clean up the vegetable garden in the fall as it does to fix up the plants in the front yard. Tomato leaf spot, and some of the diseases of ornamental plants often spend the winter on the old leaves and stems of plants left in the garden after the crops have been harvested. Mother Thompson and I keep most of these troubles from annoying us in the summer by gathering and

burning the garden rubbish at the time we clean up the front lawn in the fall.

We generally beautify our back yard garden in the winter by seeding it to rye in the fall. The green rye improves the general appearance of the landscape during the winter months, and furnishes green feed for our chickens. All in all, rye is much more profitable than a crop of dried leaves and stems that harbor insect and disease pests.

Mother Thompson says that back yard gardeners and people who have nice lawns generally reap about what they sow. She told me the other night that our neighbor Casey Smith was going to have a good lawn next summer. I asked her how she knew, and she said, "Well, he's been working on his lawn, after office hours, every afternoon for several days. I saw him this afternoon spading bone meal and compost into the soil where the hedge has shaded out the grass."

Now I don't always agree with Mother Thompson. I never did. We've had some hot arguments in our day, but I certainly can say "amen" to her statement that people reap what they sow in a garden or on a lawn. People who put a lot of thought into the planning, and a lot of elbow grease into the making of back yard gardens and lawns usually get the ribbons. At least it's that way in our community. Casey Smith won the blue ribbon in our lawn contest this summer. And I know from what Mother Thompson said the other night that Casey is working now for next year's ribbon. And I know from my own experience he'll give somebody a close race because he's doing the things this fall that make a lawn next summer.

Of course, the season for watering and clipping lawns is about over but it takes more than just clipping and watering to make a good lawn. Lawn specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture say that a lawn needs attention at the end of the growing season in the fall just as it needs clipping and watering in the summer. So, if you want a good lawn next summer--- put it in shape this fall. Pull out the weeds, fertilize the weak places, drain the wet spots, and do the other things that lawn specialists recommend.

But it takes more than a lawn to make a beautiful landscape. You need trees and shrubs to complete the picture. A well-formed tree in full foliage is a lovely sight, and no landscape is complete until it is dotted with the trees and shrubs that fit into that particular environment.

I usually go over our trees and shrubs in the fall at the time I put our lawn in shape and touch them up too. I cut out the broken branches and the dead limbs, and do anything else that needs doing at that time.

W. R. Beattie of the Department of Agriculture, reminds us that fall is a good time to go over the shrubs and shade trees and rid them of their sacks of bagworms. Bagworms eat the green foliage of shade trees and some shrubs. They are especially fond of evergreens. An old bagworm bag looks to be about as harmless as a piece of paper hanging on a tree. But some of the bags are dangerous because they contain eggs that hatch and start a new brood of worms in the spring. He declares that you can reduce bagworm troubles a great deal next summer by gathering and burning the old sacks this fall.

Fall is also a good time to plant and transplant in sections where the winters are mild. The transplanting season for shrubs and trees begins in the fall, runs through the winter, and on into the spring. Some people do that work in the fall while others prefer to put it off until spring. Weather conditions and your own convenience generally determine the time.

Mr. Beattie does his planting and transplanting during the fall when he can get to it. That's because he has more time then and can do a better job at that time than he can if he waits until spring when he is rushed with a thousand and one things to do.

I haven't said anything about what to plant or where to plant it. I'm not going to either. That's an individual problem. The purpose of this talk on improving the home grounds in the fall is to remind you that we are approaching the end of the growing season for back yard gardens, flowers, lawns, shade trees, and shrubs, and that these things need attention at the end of the growing season just as much as in the middle or at the start of the season.

If you have a back yard garden, clean up the rubbish, and get rid of disease and insect pests by burning old leaves and vines, and anything else that might harbor these troublemakers over winter.

If you want to improve the appearance of your lawn this fall as well as next summer, dig up the weeds now. Trim the grass, fertilize and reseed the weak places, fill up the depressions and drain the wet spots this fall.

I find that it pays to trim out the dead places in the shrubbery, and work a little bone meal or other slow acting fertilizer around each shrub in the fall if you want it to show off to the best advantage in the summer.

We nearly always touch up our shade trees in the fall by removing the broken branches, cutting out the dead limbs, and by sometimes working a little bone meal into the soil around the roots of the trees that need help.

By doing such things at the end of the growing season in the fall we not only save a lot of licks in the spring, but we pave the way for a more beautiful landscape the following summer.

That's all. Mother Thompson and I bid you good bye and good luck.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: This is Station_____in_____, and you have been listening to Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture. Neighbor Thompson's program will be back on the air at this time next Wednesday. You are invited to tune in. The subject will be THE CARE OF HOUSE PLANTS IN WINTER.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Radio Service
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS

Wednesday, October 26, 1932.

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes.

All Regions.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Wednesday, October 26, o'clock. Station _____ presenting Neighbor Thompson's PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS, a weekly agricultural feature from the United States Department of Agriculture. All right, Neighbor.

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How do you do, TOWN FARMERS. Let's talk today about the WINTER CARE OF HOUSE PLANTS. This week winds up October. "The last rose of summer" is gone. Winter is coming on, and it's time to be looking ahead to the indoor garden; time to house the potted plants, and start the bulbs for winter flowering this winter.

Mother Thompson and I have already housed some of our most delicate plants. We'll take in the rest of our delicate house plants as the season advances.

But there is one thing we won't do. We won't try to take in everything in the yard. We tried that once, and it didn't work. We crowded our windows so full of flowers that some of the plants failed to get enough sunlight. Those plants that couldn't get direct sunlight first turned pale, then lost their leaves, and finally died. We lost at least half the plants we put in the house that winter. But we learned by losing. Now when we start to house our plants for the winter Mother Thompson says in that quiet way of hers---"Only a few of the choicest plants, please---Don't fill the windows full---And don't try to bring in everything in the yard."

Here's a list of the plants we have brought into the house. Four begonia plants, three ferns, a couple of poinsettas that were cut back after they bloomed last winter, and one geranium. Those, with two ferns, a screw pine, and a small palm we already have in the house will make up our collection of house plants this winter.

Mother Thompson and I lift plants from flower beds in the open yard as well as those that spend the summer in pots, but we do it in a different way. Here's the way we lift a plant from a flower bed in the yard:

First, we give the plant a good watering. We give that watering in the bed, several hours before we lift the plant. While the water is moistening the soil around the roots of the plant, we get ready for the potting. We use new pots. New pots are clean. I put a few little stones or a few pieces of broken flower pot in the bottom of each pot. That's for drainage. The stones keep the soil from clogging the drainage hole in the bottom of the pot, and prevent water from standing around the roots of the plant. Next I cover the drainage rocks in the bottom of the pot with a handful of fresh soil. Then I am ready to lift the plant from the bed where it grew.

I lift the plant with a trowel. To lift the plant, I cut a circle around it a little smaller than the inside diameter of the flower pot, and then lift the ball of earth with the plant in the middle, and set the ball and plant in the pot. Finally, I tamp good soil between the ball of earth and the side of the flower pot, but I don't fill the pot full of soil. I leave a half inch space at the top of the pot to hold the water when I water the plant.

Next I water the plants. I always water potted plants immediately after I lift them and put them in pots, to prevent the plants from wilting. Once a plant wilts, it is hard to revive it. Sometimes I spray the leaves of my newly potted plants with fresh water. That spraying reduces the amount of moisture the plant loses through evaporation and so helps prevent wilting.

Well, after watering my newly potted plants, I move them to a shady place where they will be sheltered from the wind. I leave the plants in that place two or three days, and water them twice a day while they are there.

After two or three days of that treatment, I take the plants into the house. But I never take outdoor plants directly into a hot room. I take them into a cool room where they can get plenty of ventilation, and leave them there until they get used to their new quarters. That takes only a few days. After that we can move the plants about at will.

That's all on housing plants from the open yard, unless you prune them. I usually prune our begonias and geraniums. I do my pruning several days before I pot the plants. Pruning the top reduces the drain on the roots, and helps the plant through the transplanting operation.

But housing potted plants like ferns and palms is different again. We don't need to pot them. The plants are in pots to begin with. But we give each plant a medical examination before we admit it to the house.

First, Mother Thompson and I examine the soil in each pot for earthworms. Yes sir, earthworms. Mother Thompson can't stand earthworms, and the potted plants don't like earthworms any better than Mother Thompson does. If our examination shows earthworms in a pot, that pot gets a dose of medicine at once. The medicine is limewater. We make it by dissolving one cup of hydrated lime in two quarts of water, then letting the sediment settle to the bottom. Mother Thompson and I solve the earthworm problem completely by giving our potted plants a daily dose of the clear limewater for several days before we house the plants. Some of our neighbors rid their potted plants of earthworms by using mercuric chloride. That does the work too. But mercuric chloride is a deadly poison, and I leave poison alone because I'm inclined to be a bit careless. But mercuric chloride is sure-fire for earthworms.

After we get rid of the earthworms, we do some trading. We swap soil in the top of the flower pot. We swap an inch or so of the top soil in the pot for some nice, clean, fresh soil that has no earthworms. That gives us a chance to feed the plants a little ordinary fertilizer. Fertilizers are good for plant They pep up the plants and make 'em look good, but you don't want to use too muc fertilizer. If you do, you'll kill the plant.

After fertilizing the plants, I next clean the pots. We clean our flower pots with a wire brush and plenty of water. Now remember Mother Thompson and I

do four things to our potted plants before we take them into the house for the winter. First, we clean out the earthworms. Second, we swap off the old soil in the top of the flower pot for clean, fresh soil. Third, we feed the plants a little ordinary fertilizer, and fourth, we clean the pots before we take the plants into the house for the winter. That's all.

We have fun getting our plants ready for the house. Our trouble starts when we get the plants inside. In the first place we like a temperature around 70 degrees, but 70 degrees is about 10 degrees too high for the majority of house plants. We compromise by holding the temperature around 68 degrees.

Some of our neighbors have trouble with their house plants because the atmosphere in the house is too dry. But that doesn't bother us. We have water pans attached to our radiators and that solves the moisture problem. A friend wrote me last week and complained that her house plants were dying. She said, "I keep my house plants in the south windows of my kitchen and I have a gas stove in the kitchen. Do you think the gas is killing the plants?" Of course it is. Plants can't breathe gas fumes all day long, day after day, without being killed.

Only yesterday I had a letter from another friend. He complained that his house plants were losing their leaves this fall. The trouble had been diagnosed as "red spider," and he wanted to know if that is a serious trouble. You bet it is. Red spider is a very small insect that saps the life of plants. The spiders are so small that I have to use a magnifying glass to see them, but I don't need a magnifying glass to see the injury they do to the plants. Red spiders cause the leaves to turn yellow, and then drop off. Eventually that kills the plant. Mother Thompson and I solve our red spider problem by giving our house plants a cold water bath on a sunshiny porch, and then spraying the plants thoroughly with a weak solution of nicotine sulphate. Red spiders can't stand cold water and nicotine sulphate. It kill's them.

Casey Smith has the most beautiful lawn in our community. He's a wizard at growing plants outdoors, but he just can't grow plants in the house. He gives house plants too much water, and the plants die from "wet feet." House plants need water once or twice a day, but don't overdo it. Too much water kills the plant.

Mother Thompson keeps a saucer under every flower pot in our house. Our plan of watering the plants is to water sparingly once or twice a day. During cloudy weather we cut down on the amount of water, or skip a watering or so until the soil dries out a trifle. We never allow water to accumulate or to stand in the saucer.

House plants need sunlight, too. We give our house plants all the direct sunlight they can get, and turn the pots around every day or so to prevent the plants from growing towards the light.

The majority of house plants are not poisonous. But there is one species of Primrose that is very poisonous to some people. The poisonous species of Primrose is the "Primula Obconica." That plant is covered with bristly hairs, and the hairs are poisonous to a great many people. Other species of Primrose

are all right for house plants because they are not poisonous. But look out for the Primula Obconica with its bristly hairs.

That's all. Thank you, and good _____.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: And that was Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS coming to you from Station _____ in _____ through the cooperation of the United States Department of Agriculture.